



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

BRUSH AND PENCIL.

VOL. II.

MAY, 1898.

No. 2.

THE PERMANENT COLLECTIONS IN THE MUSEUM OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO.

V.—The Old Dutch Masters.

IT is hardly to be wondered at that the tiny Netherlands, which regained inch by inch from the tempestuous waters of the North sea and the overflowing Rhine through centuries of indomitable labor the land that records some of the most remarkable civic, religious and political events in the history of the world; whose borders became the threshold of religious and political freedom; whose universities have attracted the learned from all lands, and whose navigators were the first to reach the remotest parts of the world, should be the birthplace of an art as vital and characteristic as the life of her brave people. Well may it be asked, What is contained in the art of the Dutch school that has given it such a dominant position? Their art contained a profound knowledge and appreciation of the science of light. Rembrandt fathomed the mystery of this science to its depths; his brush flowed with color dipped in light, luminous as the sun and in shadows mysterious as the mantle of night. The poetry of light and shade was ever their theme, with its infinite chords and harmonies. They found this subtle evanescent beauty in the air tremulous with morning light, in the sky, in rolling clouds casting purple shadows over the golden fields and red-roofed towns, in their quaint houses lighted by small latticed windows, on their busy canals and the wild seas that surrounded them. They found it everywhere. To them the commonplace no longer existed.

The beauty or lack of beauty in material things gave the Dutch masters least concern; an object, irrespective of its intrinsic worth, was only beautiful in proportion to its capacity to reflect light or be absorbed in shadow to fulfill its function. This is true in three among the most notable pictures in this collection — "The Jubilee," by Adriaan van Ostade; "The Guitar Lesson," by Gerardus Terburg, and "The Happy Mother," by Willem van Mieris. Excepting the satin dress in "The Guitar Lesson" the material things that make up the composition of these pictures are not worth the value of so much junk, and the figures in real life would hardly excite our notice. "The Jubilee," by van Ostade, is a rare example of his skill, rich and mellow in color and exquisite in



PORTRAIT OF A GIRL, REMBRANDT VAN RIJN.

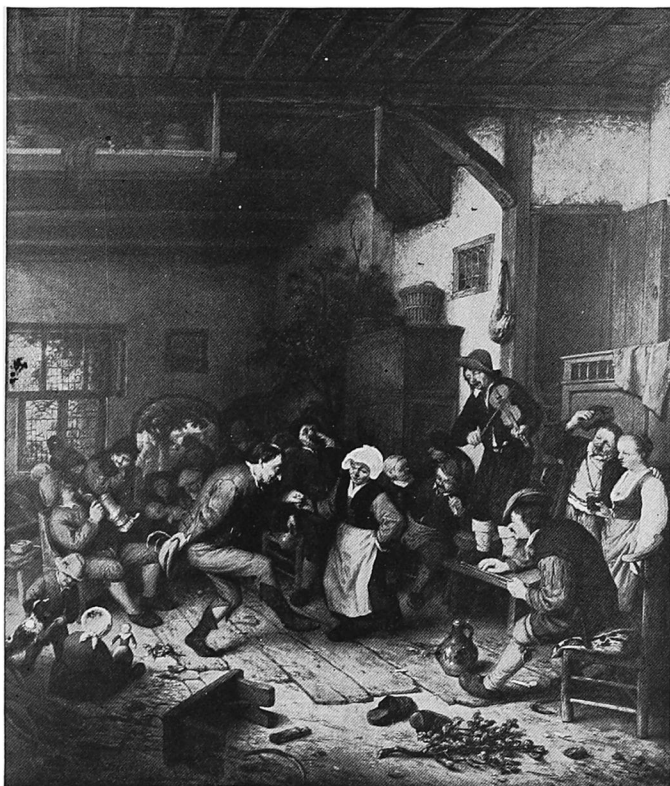
tone. Note the picturesqueness of the interior, the apparent abandon of arrangement, yet making a symmetrical composition. High against the wall stands the fiddler intent upon his tune, near him to the right a young couple and a peasant leaning forward beating time. In the middle is an old man and woman dancing away with all the spirit of youth; in the foreground are children at play, and still life thrown aside to make room for the dancers; further back, near an open entrance, sit spectators drinking. The foreground is in a beautiful mellow light, giving warmth to the color and leading subtly into the half-tone and darkness of the

interior. It is an exquisite picture, full of light, color and character, and truly æsthetic in the highest sense of art. "The Guitar Lesson," by Terburg, though hardly so worthy an example, is well worth close scrutiny. The division of the masses of light and shade seen at a distance is modified by the penetration of the one into the other in so delicate a manner that between them they express depth of space, which is gracefully filled by the wholesome young woman with the exquisitely painted white satin dress, holding the guitar and sitting before a piano-forte, at the end of which is the young master well in shadow. It is a charming composition, though in the matter of tone it is not equal to the



PORTRAIT OF MARQUIS SPINOLA, BY PETER PAUL RUBENS.

best of his works one sees in the European galleries. The third picture, "The Happy Mother," tells its own story. Here we find realism in texture and detail to a degree, leaving us to wonder how it was possible to be so minute and yet retain such breadth of effect. The wickerwork in the cradle in the full light is painted with no more detail than a



THE JUBILEE, BY ADRIAAN VAN OSTADE.

similarly made bird cage hanging in deep shadow. The still life on the table is marvelously rendered, worthy of Dow, who was preëminent in painting with exquisite minuteness. But all of this is mainly beautiful because it coexists with the most delicate yet luscious color, true values,

luminosity in the light and infinite depth in the shadow, all bound together by complete harmony of tone.

The Art Institute may be justly proud to house permanently such a treasure in the way of a painting as Rembrandt's "Portrait of a Girl," or as the catalogue states, sometimes called "The Child of the State." A young girl leaning with hands upon the window sill, looking out full face into the soft sunlit morning air, comprise the material and incidents; but note what he has achieved with them. The effect of light and shade without being forced is strong and simplicity itself in rendering; the modeling is firm and substantial, luminous in the lights and mellow and retiring in the shadows. Add to this the fine carriage and character of head and it may give a hint at this wonderful picture. The "Accountant," also by Rembrandt, has much higher color and is more loosely treated, but does not leave the intense impression of the former. "The Portrait of the Artist's Son," by Franz Hals, is a good example of his characterization and handling. Hals was essentially the painter—he wielded his brush as the expert fencer his rapier, fatefully sure, but with a dash that ever astonishes. The portrait, "Marquis Spinola," by Rubens, is another notable head. Noble in carriage, fine in color, intense in character, it combines superbly the requirements of a portrait. So, too, the three-quarter length, by the gentle Van Dyck, of Princess Helena Leonara de Lievere, devoid of ostentation, its simplicity is its charm. Of the landscapes, "The Water Mill," by Hobbema, the father of modern landscape art, deserves warmest interest. It is intensely picturesque, and of a kind in which the Dutch revel. An old red-roofed mill, with overshot wheel, the dam, mill stream, winding road to the left disappearing among the low hills, the variety of trees—all go together in masses that interlace and produce a fine composition. We might speak at greater length of Ruisdael, with his noisy waterfalls; Jan Steen's interiors, with rollicking peasants; Backhuysen's and Van de Velde's animated marines; Cuyp's cattle and landscapes, and Berghem's shepherds. The Dutch school was ever true to its art instincts. The artists painted because they loved to and depicted what they loved. They were true to themselves, true to their period and time. Their art embraced all humanity, touched upon every mood and character, blessing all with the benediction of heaven's mellow light.

J. H. VANDERPOEL.